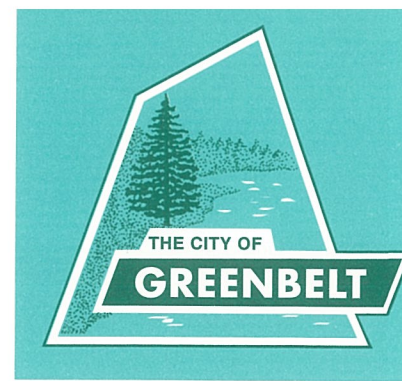


CITY OF GREENBELT

25 CRESCENT ROAD, GREENBELT, MD. 20770-1886



December 14, 2015

CITY COUNCIL

Emmett V. Jordan, Mayor
Judith F. Davis, Mayor Pro Tem
Konrad E. Herling
Leta M. Mach
Silke I. Pope
Edward V.J. Putens
Rodney M. Roberts

The Honorable Lawrence J. Hogan, Jr.
Maryland State House
100 State Circle
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Governor Hogan:

On behalf of the residents of the City of Greenbelt, the City Council urges you to reconsider your request that Syrian refugees not be directed to Maryland. We express our strong support for welcoming to our state any and all vetted refugees from any corner of the world where war and terrorism have caused death and fear. The world is witnessing the largest refugee crisis since World War II with more than 4 million Syrians having fled their home country to escape conflict and violence, and 6.5 million who are internally displaced.

The world is in need of humanitarian leadership willing to help with this refugee crisis and Maryland should lead the way. Many, if not most, of the refugees have lost loved ones to persecution, violence, and starvation, in addition to having had their country, their community, and everything they own brutally taken away from them. Maryland is considered the birth place of religious freedom in our nation. It was formed as a refuge for Catholics being persecuted in England. We should not turn our back on our history.

Greenbelt residents are committed to being a caring and compassionate community. For example, our community pledge reads - *The strength of Greenbelt is diverse people living together in a spirit of cooperation. We celebrate people of many cultures, faiths, and races living together. By sharing together all are enriched. We pledge to foster a community which is respectful, safe, and fair for all people.* In addition, our City has joined with the National League of Cities (NLC) Partnership for Working Toward Inclusive Communities by welcoming new residents and working to increase citizen participation and engagement while promoting equal opportunity and fairness. At our annual Greenbelt Day celebration, we are proud to host a Citizenship Swearing-In Ceremony.

Refugees are the most thoroughly vetted group of people who come to the United States. Security screenings are rigorous and involve the Department of Homeland Security, the FBI, the Department of Defense and other intelligence agencies. This process typically takes more than two years. There is no immediate need for State officials to demand a halt to resettlement in our State or impose additional restrictions or security measures.

A NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK

(301) 474-8000 FAX: (301) 441-8248

www.greenbeltmd.gov



To turn our back on refugees is to betray our history and core values as the Free State that benefits from the contributions of all our immigrant communities. We are not made unsafe by the presence of Syrian refugees among us. We are enriched and blessed by the skills and diversity they bring. We believe we are upholding our most dearly-held values by embracing them in our midst. We urge you to reconsider your request and to join us in welcoming Syrian – and all other – refugees to our State.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Emmett V. Jordan".

Emmett V. Jordan
Mayor

cc: City Council
The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
The Honorable Ben Cardin
The Honorable Steny Hoyer
The Honorable Thomas Mike Miller
The Honorable Michael Busch
The Honorable Paul Pinsky
The Honorable Tawanna Gaines
The Honorable Anne Healey
The Honorable Alonzo Washington
The Honorable Todd Turner
The Honorable Rushern Baker
Joshua Hamlin